

Human Rights Commission Meeting
Wednesday, August 27, 2014
6:30pm, first floor meeting room, Town Hall

Agenda

Opening/Welcome:

Agenda Review/Additions

Review and Approve Minutes of May 15, 2014

Old Business:

1. Recap of
 - a. Human Rights annual Picnic and awards—any suggestions for change or improvements?
 - b. Frederick Douglass reading
 - c. Paint n Sip Fundraiser;
 2. FY 15 events and activities updates:
 - a. Community Summit plans
 - b. Film, Book and Video series—
Erika Zekos: September book reading event for *The Opportunity Equation – How Citizen Teachers Are Combating the Achievement Gap in America's Schools* is scheduled for **on Saturday September 6th from 11:30 – 1:00 at the Jones Library's Woodbury Room**. Author Eric Schwarz will read from the book. Here is the link to information about the book: <http://book.citizenschools.org/>. Are there others in the works?
 - c. Disability etiquette training
 - d. Community Conversations—Fire Chief; Council on Aging Director; LSSE Director; DPW Director; Amherst Survival Center Director, etc
 - e. Other events?
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3. Amherst Together Initiative-Carol Ross to describe her Media and Climate Specialist role and what Amherst Together is about.
 4. Request from Martha Spiegelman and Mohamed Elgadi (Amnesty International) to participate in a larger International Human Rights Day celebration, probably on Sunday, December 7, at Jones Library. Planning Meeting Saturday Sept 20 1pm, Jones Library - anyone to attend?
 5. 2013 Human Rights Commission annual report for Town Report (review of draft).
 6. Commission vacancies- (2) Good to get a college student? Encourage prospective applicants to visit www.amherstma.gov and the Boards and Committees tab to complete a Citizen Activity form (top of page).
 7. Fall meeting schedule: Thursdays, September 18; October 16; November 20; Dec 18

Other Business: Any other topics the Chair did not reasonably anticipate 48 hours before the meeting

Agenda 4

Radway, Deborah

From: Radway, Deborah on behalf of Human Rights Department
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2014 11:49 AM
To: Carol Ross (carross_2000@yahoo.com); Greg Bascomb (gbascomb@bascomblaw.com); ingrid askew; Kathleen Anderson; Liam Brodigan; Lois Raj; Moyston, Jennifer; Sid Ferreira
Subject: FW: Human Rights Day program in December, asking for your support

To add to the agenda for next Thursday.....

From: Martha Spiegelman [mailto:spiegelman22@netzero.net]
Sent: Friday, August 15, 2014 12:58 PM
To: spiegelman22@netzero.net
Subject: Human Rights Day program in December, asking for your support

To: Human Rights organizations

From: Martha Spiegelman, Mohamed Elgadi, and groups Fanny Rothschild, the Connecticut Valleyfor Amnesty-Amherst Chapter-Group 128

Date: August 15, 2014

Dear Fellow Advocates for Human Rights,

Our Amnesty chapter in Amherst, known as Group 128, has held its initial discussions about the annual program to observe International Human Rights Day which we will hold in Amherst near December 10th, International Human Rights Day. We invite your organization to offer suggestions and comments about what we are planning now for the program, and we also invite you to assist in some of the planning.

We will center on the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. We are going to take note of three elements: 1) the history of the forging of this document; 2) the presentation of the 30 articles comprising the *Declaration*; and 3) how we can make these articles part of the everyday life of the community. We believe that we can enlist an informed speaker here in the five-college area to give a brief historical account, along with several local human rights organizations to guide the way to bring the articles into sharp focus for community action.

With regard to the presentation of the *Declaration's* 30 articles, we are planning a somewhat novel approach. We will employ performance as a way to communicate the articles, through music, acting, dance, pantomime, recitation, movement, poster art, puppetry, and other ways. We think that such artistic and energetic forms are pertinent to many human rights actions (demonstrations, song, speeches, placards, and the like), and will interest attendees, and may---we think so---attract the presence and participation by some of the young people in the community. We will ask a large number of presenters to take part: actors, singers, dancers, musicians, mimes, puppeteers, poets, prose writers, painters and drawers, and others, with requests made especially to school groups.

The date for the human rights program is less than four months from now, probably on Sunday afternoon, December 7th, at The Jones Library in Amherst. We will confirm with you the date as soon as the reservation with the library is settled. We know that time passes quickly which is why we think it is crucial to begin our work now. If your group would like to be a co-sponsor, please let us know soon.

We take this opportunity, also, to remind you that the Amherst Human Rights Commission organizes a reading of the *Declaration* on the Town Common on the evening of December 10th itself. It is always a moving experience. Amnesty-Group 128 will gladly help to send around word to increase the participation.

Our next Amnesty-Group 128 meeting is on Saturday, September 20, at 1 pm, Jones Library in Amherst. We welcome your attendance at our meeting. If you wish to participate in our planning, please let us know, we'd be glad to have your ideas.

We look forward to a rewarding collaboration in this significant annual event.

With cordial regards, from,

Martha Spiegelman, (coordinator, Group 128), Fanny Rothschild,
Mohamed Elgadi, Planning Committee for Human Rights Day Program,
Amnesty-Group 128

www.amnestyamherst.blogspot.com

Contact: Martha Spiegelman
spiegelman22@netzero.net / 413-253-7934

cc: still adding to the list----

Town of Amherst Human Rights Commission; College and University Amnesty chapters; African and African-American Education Research and Training Institute; American Civil Liberties Union, Western Mass; American Friends Service Committee; Amherst Chinese Christian Church; Amherst Zion Korean Church; Anti-Drones Committee; Baha'i Community of Amherst; Baha'i Community of Hadley; Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Amherst; First Baptist Church, Amherst; First Congregational Church of Amherst, Peace Building Ministry; Free Tibet; Grace Episcopal Church, Amherst; Hampshire Mosque, Amherst; Holocaust Museum, UMass; Hope Community Church, Amherst; Immanuel Lutheran Church, Amherst; Jehovah Witnesses, Amherst; Jewish Community of Amherst, Tikkum Olam/Social Action Committee; Jewish Family Services; Leverett Peace Commission; Media Education Foundation; Mt. Toby Society of Friends, Leverett; NAACP, Western Mass; New England Peace Pagoda, Leverett; No More Guantánamos, Pioneer Valley; Northampton Committee to Stop Wars; Orange Ink; Race Amity; Rosenberg Fund for Children; Saint Brigid's Roman Catholic Church; South Amherst Congregational Church; Thomas Paine Friends in Massachusetts; Traprock Center for Peace and Justice; UMoja Now; Unitarian-Universalist Society of Amherst, Social Justice Committee; Wesley United Methodist Church of Hadley; Western Mass Jobs With Justice; Witness Against Torture; Women's Voices Worldwide;

and Cynthia Gabriel, Northeast Regional Coordinator-Amnesty International USA

Martha Spiegelman
185 Middle Street, Amherst MA 01002-3011
spiegelman22@netzero.net / 413-253-7934

Agenda
ZB

Radway, Deborah

Subject: FW: Education book reading event on 9/6

From: Erika Zekos [mailto:studiozed@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, August 19, 2014 8:12 PM
To: Geryk, M; Ross, Carol
Cc: Musante, John; Radway, Deborah; 'Monica Hall'; Westmoreland, D
Subject: RE: Education book reading event on 9/6

Hi Maria and all,

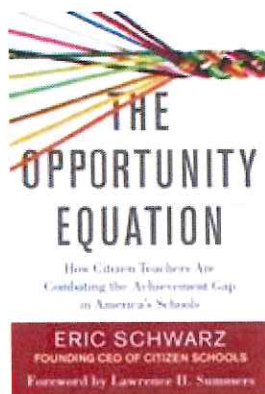
I'm delighted to let you all know that the book reading event for *The Opportunity Equation – How Citizen Teachers Are Combating the Achievement Gap in America's Schools* is scheduled for **on Saturday September 6th from 11:30 – 1:00 at the Jones Library's Woodbury Room**. Author Eric Schwarz will read from the book & we'll have plenty of time for discussion & refreshments.

I'll have a more official invitation soon, but want to make sure it's on your calendar. Please plan to join me! Anything you can do to help spread the word about the event with your colleagues, students & your friends in the community would be most appreciated!!

Here is the link to information about the book: <http://book.citizenschools.org/>

And this is the direct link to the event RSVP page (it's free & open to the public, but they'd appreciate knowing how many are planning to attend): <http://book.citizenschools.org/book-tour/>

Thanks to you all!
Erika



On Aug 5, 2014, at 10:43 PM, "Erika Zekos" <studiozed@comcast.net> wrote:

Dear Maria, John, Carol, Deb, and Monica,

I'm writing today because I'm interested in gaining your support for a book reading that I'm helping to organize on behalf of my good friend, Eric Swartz. Eric's latest book, [The Opportunity Equation](#), is due out on Sept. 2nd. Eric is a social entrepreneur who founded [Citizen Schools](#), a Boston-based organization, in 1995 with the goal of closing the achievement gap for low-income students by harnessing the power of the community especially during the abundance of out-of-school time. Over the years Citizen Schools has expanded to cities across the US and has provided opportunities for students that have made a real difference.

Eric is available on Saturday September 6th to come to Amherst for a book reading and discussion. I feel that his voice will be a valuable addition to our current community conversation regarding equity, diversity, and access to learning opportunities. While Citizen Schools may not be a model that Amherst chooses to pursue, Amherst has many after school programs, nonprofit organizations, engaged family members, and business leaders whose interest in the success of all of our students could be catalyzed by hearing about Eric's experience using social capital to support public education.

To be clear, Eric's organization focuses on out-of-school time, but does so as one leg of the support system that is anchored by our public schools. His mission has been to provide opportunities for low-income students and to support our teachers in closing the achievement gap by engaging citizen mentors. Citizen mentors can be farmers or chefs, lawyers, architects, physicians, web designers, etc... I was a mentor when I lived in Dorchester and provided a photography apprenticeship to a group of 12 amazing middle school students. It was a wonderful experience for me, and I hope, for the students too. They certainly created amazing work!

Here are a couple of review snippets:

"...a constructive blueprint for boosting achievement without abandoning public education." — Publishers Weekly

"Eric Schwarz and Citizen Schools have empowered thousands of low-income children across America so they could graduate college, get terrific jobs, and join the middle class. In *The Opportunity Equation*, Schwarz shows us what public education needs to look like if America is going to continue to be a leading economic power." — Geoffrey Canada

I am reaching out to Tony Maroulis at UMass to see if the University Club will be available for a couple of hours on the afternoon of Sept. 6th and will be advertising about the event as soon as the time and location are secured. It would be phenomenal to have you all in attendance at the reading!

Would it be possible to talk with you further about this opportunity? Thanks so much for your consideration & I hope you'll join me and the community in welcoming Eric to Amherst!

Erika

PS --

You can read more about Eric and his book here: <http://book.citizenschools.org/>

This is the Citizen Schools website: <http://www.citizenschools.org/>

Erika Zekos
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Human Rights Commission:

The Human Rights Commission met nine times in the year, and welcomed new Commissioners Emily Jung and Liam Brodigan, students at Amherst Regional High School, and Carol Ross and Ingrid Askew from the community. Longtime Chair Reynolds Winslow resigned in December to relocate out of town, and Commissioner Gregory Bascomb assumed the role of Chair. Emily Jung assumed role of Board Clerk.

The Commission held its annual community reading of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Common on December 10, and 18 hearty souls read by candlelight on a frigid evening.

The Commission started a Human Rights Blog on the town website and a Facebook Page to promote its events.

One January 1, 2013 the Town and Human Rights Commission celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation with a gathering on the steps of Town Hall. Senator Stan Rosenberg and Representative Ellen Story read greetings from the Governor and Legislature and Select Board Chair Stephanie O'Keeffe led a reading of the entire Proclamation.

Black History Month was observed with several events. On February 16 the Commission collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce, BID and area artists to paint storefronts with images of how black history impacts American society. The images were preserved for the month for the public to view. Also on February 16, the Commission facilitated a "Walk for the People, Walk for the Earth" peace and disarmament walk from Northampton to Amherst, organized by the Leverett Peace Pagoda, followed by a potluck at the Woodbury Room at the Jones Library. On February 19, the Commission sponsored a spoken word event at Town Hall called "BHM unplugged" featuring local poets narrating on the black experience.

In February, the Commission also voted to send a letter to the Amherst Historical Commission regarding the importance of the North Common as a valuable public space on which citizens can freely gather, conduct vigils and protests. This letter was written to provide comment on and to support a Town grant application for Common restoration.

In March the Commission held a retreat to focus on priorities and event planning for the coming year. During the winter and spring the Commission also met with and supported activities of the local chapter of Amnesty International, Justice for Jonas and the Echo Village Tenants Association.

The Human Rights Commission held its annual Human Rights Heroes Awards picnic on June 19, 2013, during the Start of Summer Block Party Celebrating Human Rights and the Juneteenth Holiday on the Town Common. Awards recipients were ARHS graduating Seniors Zihui Adams, Dominik Doemer, Regina East and James Kirwin; ARHS students Benjamin Thiessen and Xaq Kruezer-Land, Crocker Farm students Wesley Killough-Hill, Daudy Guerrero and Eva Ross-Perkins, Fort River Elementary School students Jenna and April Schilling and former Commission Chair Reynolds Winslow. 2012. Masters of Ceremonies for the event were Commissioner Liam Brodigan and ARHS student Saja Jefferson. A grand time was had by all.